

CONSIDERATIONS

Engr'd [Lanc. & Alder. - viii. b. iii.]

On the Late Act of Parliament, for Settling the Trade to *AFRICA*.

1st. **I**T is Agreed by all Persons, That the *English West-India* Plantations are of vast Advantage to this Kingdom, by the Riches they produce, and a Large Expence of our Own Manufactures, with a continued Encrease of our Navigation which they Occasion.

2^{dly}. It is also acknowledged that the said Plantations cannot Subsist without a Large Supply of *Negroes* from the Coast of *Africa*. And the Sole Question, and worthy the most mature Thoughts of the Legislative Body, is, by what means the said Trade may best be preserved, and the Plantations furnished with great Plenty, and on the Cheapest Terms.

3^{dly}. It has by Experience been found, and by the Parliament always Resolved, That Forts and Castles are absolutely necessary, for preserving and carrying on that useful Trade, which Resolution has with good Reason been grounded on the following Consideration, *viz.*

1st. The Treachery and Falshood of the Natives, who can no otherwise be kept in Awe, or obliged to Deal with us upon the Square.

2^{dly}. The Practice of other Nations, who find that their Interest with the Natives, and Trade with them is not to be preserved without Fortifications.

3^{dly}. The Convenience of having always upon the Place a Stock of *English* Manufactures, and other Goods to Supply the continued Occasions of the Natives.

4^{thly}. The Experience of the *African* Company, who for above Thirty Years have carried on the Trade, at the Extraordinary Charge of Twenty to Thirty Thousand Pounds *per Ann.* in Building and maintaining Forts and Factories; which they would not have Expended had it been Practicable to have otherwise preserved the Trade from the Designs of their Competitors, and Insolence of the Natives, and even this very War; the Companies Forts at *Gambia*, *Serretion* and *Sherbrow*, have been Plundered and Demolish'd by the Enemy; which has Cost the Company a Considerable Sum of Money to refit, and will much more before Completed; besides the great Loss of Goods and Stores taken by the Enemy.

During the time that the Company managed the whole Trade by Vertue of their Charter, having upon the Encouragement thereof advanced their Money, The Plantations encreased and flourished, and arrived to the height they now are.

5^{thly}. But divers Persons taking Liberty to Trade Separate from the Company; thereupon the Company Petition'd the Parliament for Relief, and at that time some Persons alledged that if the Trade was open, many Places would be Traded unto, as yet unknown, and thereby much more of the *English* Manufacture expended, and that the Plantations would be furnished with *Negroes* at Cheaper Rates. Whereupon the Parliament was induced in the Year 1697, to make an Experiment, by giving permission to all Persons, as well as the Company, to Trade to *Africa*, upon Payment of Ten *per Cent.* to the Company, towards the Charges of their Forts and Castles; which Trade has been accordingly carried on for Ten Years past, but has produced a quite different Effect, than was suggested, as evidently appears in as much as,

1st. That the Private Traders have not in all this time found out any new Places of Trade.

2^{dly}. By means of many Ships coming sometimes together to the Places where the Company have Forts and Factories, and even by the Expectation of their Arrival, The *Blacks*, who are subtle People, taking Advantage thereof, have not only lowred the Prizes of our own Commodities, but advanced the Price of *Negroes*, from Three Pound *per Head*, to Ten, Eleven and Twelve Pounds *per Head*; all which Advantage the *Blacks* Gain, and the same is a clear Loss to *England*; and hereby it comes to pass that the Planters are necessitated to pay a much higher Price for their *Negroes* than formerly.

3^{dly}. The *Blacks* encouraged hereby insult the Companies Forts, and Factories, detain their Provisions, and create Divisions on purpose to oblige the Company to give them Presents to Compound them, which Agreements they also break as soon as made.

4^{thly}. The Ten *per Cent.* as settled by Parliament, does not answer half of the Publick Charge, as will appear by the Accounts thereof, which must be acknowledged a very great hardship upon the Company.

5^{thly}. Besides the Private Traders, or the Commanders of their Ships, cause much prejudice to the Companies Affairs by misrepresenting them to the Natives, and gives Opportunity and Encouragement to the Companies Factors to send home the Companies Effects, and to apply them to their own Use.

6^{thly}. Other Nations taking Advantage of this Confusion in the Management of the *English*, knowing the Importance and Value of this Trade, endeavour with all their Art and Skill to destroy the *English* Interest, which they well know if rightly managed would bid fairest for the Principal Part of the *African* Trade, considering the Number and Strength of Her Majesty's *West-India* Colonies.

7^{thly}. Upon the whole, the high Prizes to which *Negroes* are by this means raised on the Coast, with the Extraordinary Charges which the Company are at, above their Proportion of the Trade with the Indirect Methods used by the Private Ships, had so much exhausted their Stock, as has obliged the Company since passing the late Act, to call in from their Members 180000 Pounds upon their Stock: And it cannot be expected the Adventurers will advance, as is now again absolutely necessary, a fresh Stock to support their Fortifications, and Settlements, without a Prospect of Profit by the Trade; and unless the said Fortifications are maintain'd, they must inevitably fall into the hands of Foreigners, who strive by all methods imaginable, to bring difficulties upon the *English* Company, in order to get the whole Trade into their own hands, always assisting both the Natives, and all other Traders, who incline to have any Difference with the Company, and continually promote it.

Wherefore it is humbly hoped that the Parliament will put the Trade upon such a Foot; as may enable the Company to preserve the Forts and Fortifications on the Coast of *Africa*, and may prevent the Natives from imposing so intollerably upon the *English* as they have done of late Years, and Foreigners from wresting this Trade from her Majesty's Subjects to the Destruction of the Plantations.